



PROJECT MIND MATTERS

NEWSLETTER

**MENTAL
HEALTH
ARTICLES**

**OCTOBER
EDITION**

**UPCOMING
EVENTS**



PSYCHOEDUCATION ORGANISATION



DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

It is my pleasure to introduce this edition of our mental health magazine, dedicated to World Mental Health Day.

As we mark this significant occasion, it is essential to reflect on the importance of raising awareness about mental health and its profound impact on individuals, families, and communities around the globe. This year's theme highlights the importance of prioritising mental health in the workplace.

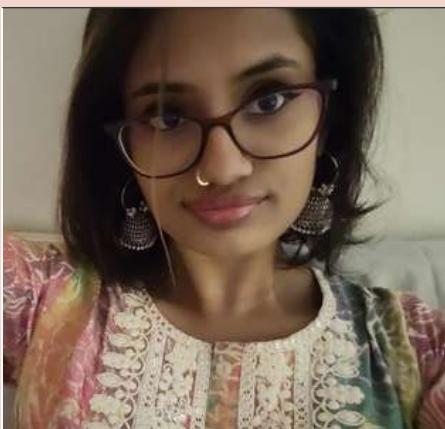
In this edition, you will find a collection of insightful articles, and personal stories that emphasize the importance of mental well-being. Our goal is to empower readers to take proactive steps towards fostering a supportive environment for themselves and those around them.

Let us use this day, and every day, as a reminder that mental health matters. Together, we can build a world where mental health is recognized, valued, and supported.

This newsletter came into existence as an initiative to increase awareness about mental health and to highlight its various aspects in a unique manner. I hope that every reader finds something to take away from this newsletter.

Warm regards,
Lipika Kumbale
Department Director

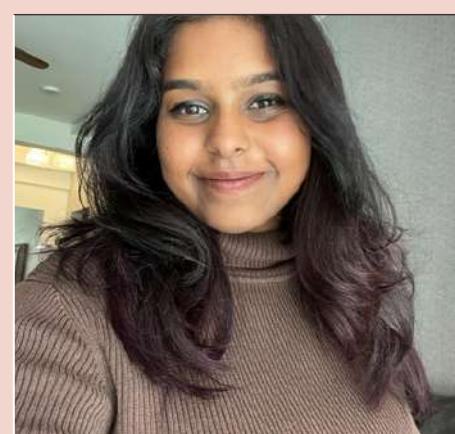
VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH



MANDISHA MANDAL

Manndisha is the epitome of reliability, someone you can always count on to deliver results with unwavering consistency. Her proactive nature sets her apart, as she anticipates challenges and addresses them before they even arise. Efficiency is at the core of everything she does, ensuring that tasks are completed not only on time but with precision. Her boundless energy fuels her dedication to every project she undertakes, making her a driving force in any team she joins. With her focus and commitment, Manndisha consistently exceeds expectations, proving to be an invaluable asset in any setting.

Sharanya is a carefree individual with a lively personality that brightens every room she steps into. Her contagious enthusiasm and strong eagerness to work make her delightful company, infusing every task with boundless energy. Full of fresh ideas, Sharanya faces challenges with a positive mindset, spreading her warmth and cheerful spirit to everyone around her. Her mere presence lifts spirits, making her a dynamic and inspiring influence in both her professional and personal circles



**SHARANYA RAMESH
SWAMINATHAN**

DESIGNED: Sree Vanshika
CONTENT: Aabha Jain

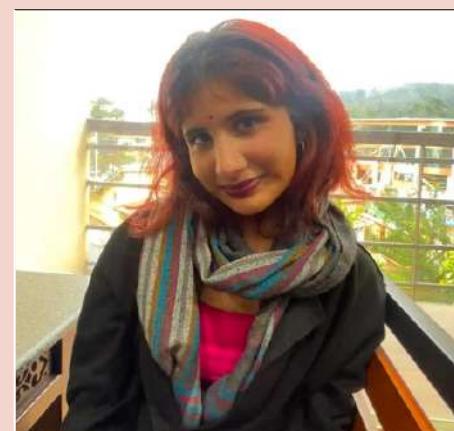


VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH

Aabha is a sincere and driven individual with an exceptional work ethic. She consistently go above and beyond, showing a remarkable ability to take initiative in any situation. Whether faced with a challenge or a routine task, she approaches everything with a positive attitude and a strong sense of responsibility.



AABHA JAIN



LALITHA ANAND

Lalitha's unwavering dedication as an HR volunteer is evident in all her endeavours, particularly in the recent PR meetings where her attention to detail shone through in the clear and well-organized MoM. Her enthusiasm and drive to succeed inspire the team and propel it forward. Eager to learn, Lalitha consistently seeks new opportunities to grow, fully embracing the responsibilities of her assigned department. Her determination to excel in operations is both motivating and impactful, making her an invaluable asset to the team.



EVENT OF THE MONTH



This month, Project MindMatters, is collaborating with ADA Dramatics, MIT Manipal to hosting an event addressing sensitive topics about woman's safety.

Through thought-provoking performances, this collaboration aims to raise awareness, foster empathy, and provide valuable mental health insights.

By blending education with the arts, the event seeks to create a safe space for open conversations around these important issues, encouraging healing and understanding within the community



DESIGNED: SREE VANSHIKA



MEET MISS MINDS



DESIGNED: Ananyah Shrivastav

CONTENT: Garima Singh

Hello! I'm **Miss Minds**, officially known as **Dr. Jean Minds**. I hail from the picturesque town of Minden, where the charming streets seem to whisper secrets of the human mind. My family has always been my anchor; my father, **Dr. Richard Minds**, is a renowned neurologist, while my mother, **Patricia Minds**, is a celebrated child psychologist. Together, they instilled in me a profound passion for **understanding human behavior**.

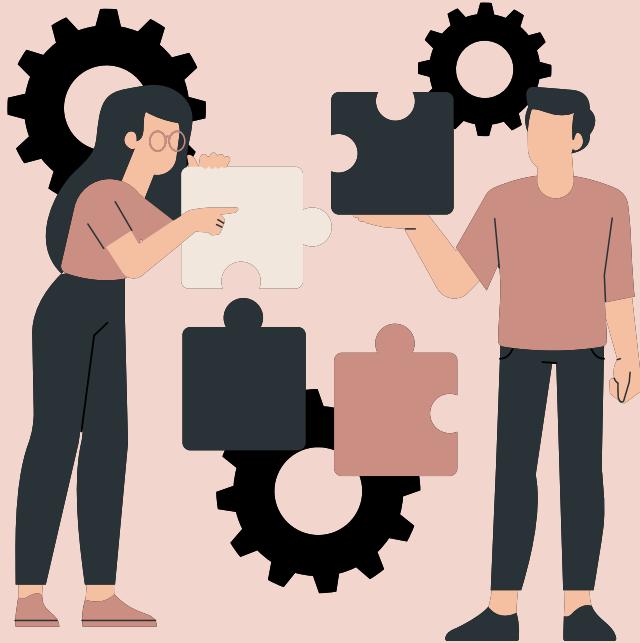
My journey in psychology began at my alma mater, **The Eastern Minds Institute**, a place where I truly delved into the depths of the human psyche. I graduated with honors, earning my degree in **Clinical Psychology**. My education was further enriched by a stint at the prestigious CogniLab, where I focused on cognitive-behavioral therapy.

I'm a proud **O-positive blood type**, which, like my work, is often described as being universally applicable. Currently, I work as a clinical psychologist at **Project MindMatters**, where I continue to explore and unravel the complexities of human behavior.





WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY



World Mental Health Day, celebrated on October 10th, brings global awareness to the importance of mental health.

In current years, there has been growing awareness and inquisitiveness of mental health in the workplace, as organizations recognize that employee well-being is directly linked to productivity, job satisfaction, and overall organizational success.

Prioritizing mental health in the workplace is no longer an option as with growing awareness and changing times it has become a essential for both employees and businesses.

This article will explore the day-to-day importance of mental health at work, highlighting initiatives from various countries and companies and providing detailed examples and case studies that showcase how organizations can improve and benefit employee mental health.

The Importance of Mental Health in the Workplace

Workplace mental health affects all aspects of functioning of an organization, from absenteeism to productivity and employee retention. Poor mental health can often cause:

- **burnout**
- **stress**
- **anxiety,**
- **depression.**

These conditions in turn can result in diminished productivity and job dissatisfaction.

On the other hand, promoting mental health in the workplace can enhance morale, increase engagement, and foster a culture of trust and support. Creating a healthy work environment also attracts top talent and helps retain employees, ultimately benefiting the bottom line.



There have been notable instances of various organisations and nations who have made the mental health of their employees and citizens a mandatory part of workingit of body text

THE UNITED KINGDOM

Mental First Aid MHFA (Mental Health First Aid) In the UK, Mental Health First Aid is a growing initiative where employees are trained to spot early signs of mental health issues and provided with support.

Much like physical first aid, MHFA orients individuals how to respond to mental health crisis. Many UK companies have implemented this training program to ensure that employees can access support in the workplace.

For instance, Barclays has trained over 200 mental health first-aid workers who are provided with communal support for confidential conversations with employees facing mental health challenges. This initiative fosters an inclusive and supportive culture and ensures early intervention, which can prevent more severe mental health issues.

AUSTRALIA:

Australia's Beyond Blue organization plays a pivotal role in raising awareness about anxiety, depression, and suicide prevention. The organization offers resources and tools for employers to create mentally healthy workplaces.

A major Australian company, Woolworths, has embraced the Beyond Blue program, incorporating it into their HR policies to provide mental health education and support.

The company has also implemented an employee assistance program EAP , offering free, confidential counseling services to its workforce.

JAPAN:

Mandatory Stress Check Program Japan has been proactive in addressing workplace stress, which has historically been a major issue in the country.





THE NETHERLANDS:

Flexible Working Policies In the Netherlands, many companies emphasize work-life balance and offer flexible working policies to help employees manage stress and avoid burnout.

Companies such as ING Bank allow employees to work from home, adjust their working hours, and take additional leave if needed.

This flexibility enables employees to maintain a healthy balance between personal and professional lives, reducing stress levels and enhancing overall job satisfaction. The Dutch approach focuses on autonomy and trust, which empowers employees and makes them feel more in control of their workload and mental well-being.



Since 2015, the Japanese government has mandated that all companies with more than 50 employees must conduct annual stress checks to evaluate the mental well-being of their workforce. Companies such as Hitachi implemented comprehensive mental health strategies based on these assessments.

Unilever's Global Mental Health Program: Unilever, a multinational consumer goods company, has been at the forefront of promoting mental health in the workplace. The company launched a global mental health program that focuses on building resilience, promoting well-being, and creating a supportive environment.



Unilever's approach includes training line managers to recognize signs of mental health struggles and provide early support.

They also offer mindfulness sessions, mental health awareness campaigns, and access to EAP services for all employees. The program has been particularly successful in the company's India and Latin American offices, where cultural stigmas around mental health previously prevented employees from seeking help.

By offering resources and openly discussing mental health, Unilever has managed to shift the narrative, encouraging employees to prioritize their well-being. The company has reported increased employee engagement, lower absenteeism rates, and improved overall productivity as a result of these initiatives.



Microsoft Mental Health Initiative:

In 2020, Microsoft expanded its mental health benefits in response to the growing challenges posed by the COVID 19 pandemic.

The company introduced 12 free therapy sessions for each employee, in addition to existing mental health benefits, and made mental health apps such as Headspace and Calm available at no cost.

. Microsoft also encouraged open dialogues about mental health through webinars, guest speakers, and employee resource groups dedicated to mental health awareness.

This initiative has had a positive impact on employees, especially those struggling with isolation, anxiety, and burnout due to remote work during the pandemic.

Microsoft's emphasis on mental health has led to a more supportive work culture, where employees feel comfortable discussing their challenges and seeking help when needed.



Furthermore, the company's commitment to mental health has enhanced its reputation as an employer that genuinely cares for the well-being of its staff.

Placing importance on mental health at work is both a moral duty and a strategic necessity. According to examples and case studies from various countries, companies that allocate resources to mental health programs can anticipate multiple advantages such as enhanced employee involvement, efficiency, and staff retention.

Building a mentally sound work environment necessitates a comprehensive strategy, including educating managers on identifying mental health issues, offering flexible work arrangements, and giving access to counseling services. By promoting a culture that prioritizes wellness, companies can cultivate a workforce that is more resilient, efficient, and content

On this World Mental Health Day, it is imperative to remember that mental health is a continuous concern and must be assimilated into everyday business practices. By learning from successful initiatives around the world, companies can take meaningful steps to support their employees and create a mentally healthy environment for everyone

DESIGNED: Honeyika Hariani

CONTENT: Garima Singh



ADHD AWARENESS MONTH

imagine a mind that races like a storm, thoughts darting like lightning, ideas colliding into one another in whirlwind energy. It is a world in which focus slips like water through your fingers. This is what life looks like for someone with 'attention deficit hyperactivity disorder' or ADHD for short, a condition where inattention and impulsivity dance with brilliance and innovation. It is easy to confuse ADHD for distraction but it's so much more than that, it means thinking differently-to be able see life in a different lens and in a constant lookout for the next spark of inspiration.

So, let's take this opportunity to understand the complexities and the shared experiences that the ADHD community face in their day to day lives. To start off, how do we know when to differentiate between the real and apparent signs of ADHD.

Some apparent signs could be:

- **Mild Distraction:** Natural lapses in concentration or having occasional moments of daydreaming may be an attribute of minor distraction, but such a thing can happen to anyone, especially when performing very routine/ mundane jobs or repetitive work.
- **High Energy:** It does not matter how energetic someone is, for this element alone does not determine that the person has ADHD. Most people are typically or biologically energetic, yet they do not develop the hyperactivity that is concurrently associated with the disorder.
- **Procrastination:** Though procrastination may be considered a symptom of ADHD, it is still one of the usual behaviours for many. It could be due to stress, boredom, or poor and ineffective time management.
- **Forgetting:** Distractibility does not mean that everyone with ADHD forget things every now and then. Indeed, no human being is immune to forgetting things from time to time either because their life is otherwise chaotic or overwhelming or just because, like everyone else, they get distracted or multitask and lose the thread of their thoughts.

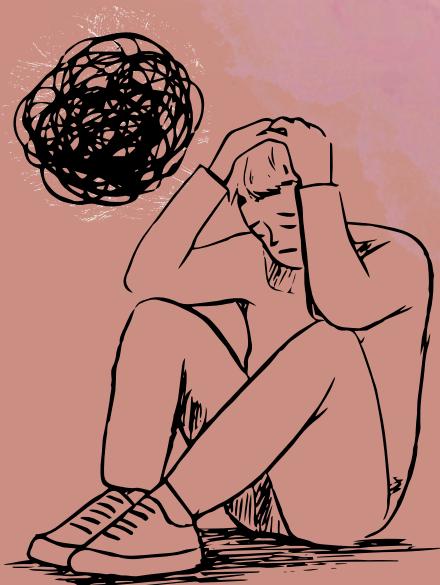




But this brings us to the question, what are the real signs then?

Real Signs:

- **Inattention:** People with ADHD generally face problems of being unable to sustain attention and they also find problem in planning activities, making careless mistakes in such activities from time to time. They are unable to keep track of things, follow through on trains, or act of time management.
- **Hyperactivity:** People with ADHD are constantly on the move, not in terms of being energetic but restlessness that disrupts daily activities and interaction, excessive talking, inability to sit still, and an excessive talking nature.
- **Impulsivity:** Interruption of others, unwillingness to wait for their turn or decisions irrespective of the consequences affect social interaction and social relations; the people they might interrupt respond or jump into the conversation.
- **Emotional Dysregulation:** Feeling inappropriate amounts of emotions related to the situation, which interferes with personal or professional relationships. He or she has difficulty controlling reactions and can be prone to outbursts or frustration. Has more trouble than most people coping with frustration or disappointment.



Moving on, lets understand the difference between casual Self-Diagnosis vs. Actual Intensity of the Disorder
Casual Self-Diagnosis vs. Actual Intensity of ADHD

Casual Self-Diagnosis:

- Usually suffers from a lack of knowledge or anecdotal experiences.
- The several symptoms which they identify miss the overall impact on daily life.
- Symptoms are misconstrued as normal variations or stress-related problems.



Actual Severity of ADHD

ADHD can cause significant impairment in academic, occupational, and social functioning.

- Diagnosis: usually requires a comprehensive evaluation by a qualified professional that includes behavioural evaluations, interviews, and standardized tests.
- The severity of symptoms varies for everyone. For many people, however, it leads to chronic impairment in relationship, vocational or occupational functioning or the regulation of emotions.



In conclusion, Understanding ADHD requires the recognition of true symptoms and subtleties that can result in misconceptions.

While there is often an overt exhibition of symptoms, ADHD indeed affects the individual's day-to-day life enough to warrant a professional diagnosis and treatment process to deal with these issues properly.

While some people may gain insight from self-realization, only an authentic medical evaluation can be considered valid. This information and knowledge are also instrumental in removing stigma and making people discriminate between normal behaviours and the actual seriousness of problems due to ADHD.



NATIONAL DEPRESSION SCREENING DAY

National Depression Screening Day is observed on October 10th each year, and it offers an opportunity to promote mental health by encouraging individuals to get free, anonymous depression screenings. This day, which falls on the same week as Mental Health Awareness Week, attempts to raise awareness of the need of early diagnosis and treatment of depression, a mental health condition that affects millions of people globally yet is frequently left untreated.

This day serves as a crucial reminder that mental and physical health are equally important. By providing easily available and accessible screenings, it enables people to identify early indicators of depression and get treatment.



This day, which is observed worldwide, serves to increase public awareness of the value of mental health screenings as a first step toward successful treatment and rehabilitation.

Mental health assessments can identify possible problems before they worsen, much like physical health screenings can. When mental health issues such as depression are identified early on, the long-term effects can be lessened and people can get the support and care they require.



Why is National Depression Screening Day becoming more and more important?

Depression is a global health concern, not merely a transient state of melancholy. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that over 280 million people worldwide suffer from depression, but many of them go untreated because of a lack of knowledge, the stigma associated with it, or difficulties getting a diagnosis. Untreated depression can have serious repercussions, from making daily tasks difficult to, sadly, committing suicide.

The stigma attached to mental health conditions is one of the main obstacles in getting treatment for them. A lot of people avoid getting professional help because they are embarrassed to acknowledge they are having problems. Some people may not even identify depression symptoms as a single condition, dismissing their emotions as fleeting or just a natural part of life.



Another major reason why so many people do not receive the necessary mental health support is accessibility. Treatment and screening are difficult to obtain in some places due to a lack of mental health resources, particularly in underprivileged or rural regions.

National Depression Screening Day becomes relevant and important in this context. It provides free, anonymous, and public screenings to dismantle these obstacles.

Enhancing accessibility and raising awareness motivates individuals to initiate the process of improving their mental well-being. People who receive early screening are better able to identify symptoms that they might otherwise ignore, which enables them to receive timely and effective care.





Tools that are often used for Depression Screening

A number of short and easy-to-use standardized instruments are available to help people and medical professionals determine whether or not depressed symptoms are present and to what extent.

Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9):

One of the most used instruments for evaluating depression is the PHQ-9, which consists of nine questions that assess how frequently depressive symptoms including exhaustion, changes in eating or sleep patterns, and low mood occur. Each question is scored on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 3 (nearly every day), and the total score indicates the severity of depression.

The Depression Scale of the Center for Epidemiologic Studies, or CES-D:

Another well-known and popular instrument for determining depressive symptoms is the CES-D, which consists of 20 items about feelings of melancholy, hopelessness, and loneliness during the previous seven days. This instrument is especially helpful when diagnosing depression symptoms in community and research settings.

Beck Depression Inventory:

A self-reporting technique called the Beck Depression Inventory assesses both the emotional and physical signs of depression. It has 21 measures that assess physical symptoms like weariness and insomnia as well as emotions of melancholy and guilt.

While these resources can help assist in directing individuals toward more assessment and therapy, they are by no means a replacement for a professional diagnosis.





Understanding what depression is and its impact :

Depression is a complex mental health condition that goes far beyond feelings of sadness. It affects how individuals think, feel, and function in their daily life. While many people associate depression with just sadness or a lack of interest in activities, the reality is that it can manifest in a wide range of symptoms—some of which are lesser known but just as debilitating.

Major and common symptoms of Depression include :

- Persistent sadness or low mood.
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities.
- Changes in appetite and sleep patterns.
- Fatigue or loss of energy.
- Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt.
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions.
- Suicidal thoughts or behaviors.



Lesser-known but common symptoms:

These symptoms don't align with the traditional expectations, hence depression often goes unrecognised.

- Physical pain: Depression can manifest physically, causing headaches, back pain, or stomach problems.
- Anger and irritability: Some individuals may experience irritability or bursts of anger rather than sadness.
- Cognitive changes: Trouble concentrating, making decisions, or remembering details are often overlooked but can be key indicators of depression.
- Existential crisis: Depression can lead some individuals to question the meaning of life or experience an overwhelming sense of purposelessness.

Why early diagnosis matters:

Depression is highly treatable, especially when detected early. That is something majority of the common public isn't aware of. However, untreated depression can worsen over time, leading to serious consequences for a person's physical and emotional well-being.



REAL-LIFE RECOVERY STORIES:

Emily's story (from the National Alliance on Mental Illness - NAMI):

"I first started feeling sad all the time in high school, but I thought it was just the stress of exams. When I got to college, things got worse—I stopped attending classes and couldn't sleep. It wasn't until a friend suggested I take a depression screening that I realized what was going on. I was diagnosed with major depressive disorder, and it was a relief to know that what I was experiencing was real. With therapy and medication, I'm now managing my depression and doing better in school."

In his memoir, William Styron describes how he struggled with undiagnosed depression for years, attributing his symptoms to other causes like stress or aging. He describes how physical pain and mental anguish almost led him to suicide before he received the diagnosis and treatment he needed.

So, what happens after you take a depression screening? If your results indicate symptoms of depression, it's important to seek professional help. A healthcare provider can provide an official diagnosis and recommend a treatment plan.

Post-Screening Options:

If your screening results suggest depression, here are some steps to take:

- Consult a healthcare provider: Speak with your doctor, therapist, or psychiatrist about your symptoms.
- You can consider therapy: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and other types of talk therapy can be effective treatments for depression.
- Explore pharmacological interventions: Antidepressants like SSRIs or SNRIs may be prescribed to help manage chemical imbalances.
- Self-Care and lifestyle changes: Exercise, sleep, and nutritious diet play important roles in mental health.





How can we all contribute to ending the stigma?

- **Creating a welcoming atmosphere:** we can develop a culture of understanding and support which is essential to increasing knowledge about depression. Communities, friends, and family can be extremely helpful in promoting open discussions about mental health and providing support to individuals who are experiencing difficulties.
- **Breaking the stigma:** This can be achieved by encouraging open discussion about mental illness and depression and by making it simpler for people to get treatment. We may all help to remove the stigma by disseminating information, lending a sympathetic ear, or fighting for mental health services and resources.

National Depression Screening Day is a powerful reminder that depression is real, common, and is treatable. Early diagnosis through simple screening tools can help countless individuals get the care they need before depression becomes life-threatening.

TAKE ACTION TODAY! WHETHER IT'S BY TAKING A SCREENING YOURSELF, ENCOURAGING A LOVED ONE, OR HELPING SPREAD AWARENESS, EVERY SMALL STEP MAKES A DIFFERENCE.



OCD AWARENESS WEEK

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) can often feel like a constant mental battle as it is a condition that shapes an individual's thoughts, emotions and behaviors, often in ways that are difficult to comprehend by others around them. This can also make it difficult for them to approach those around them as some symptoms of OCD such as disturbing intrusive thoughts can be incredibly alienating, which prolongs the suffering of those afflicted by this complex mental disorder. Here, we feature two accounts from individuals who have shared their experiences with OCD and how they cope with it and display hope and resilience.



Sam Wickey

Sam Wickey's journey with OCD began when he was a young, seven year old boy. He grew up in an Amish household where hugging or saying "I love you" was chastised, Sam tried to fill his need for connection with complex rituals, a symptom of OCD. As a child, he would often repeatedly engage in a ritual of inhaling deeply and exhaling onto the back of his hand, believing that if he did so, he was bringing his mother closer to him even though she wouldn't comfort him personally. This early manifestation of OCD would mark the beginning of a long and difficult path of a struggle with a complex mental disorder.

As Sam's OCD worsened, his life became increasingly difficult, all of his actions were now defined by the symptoms of his disorder, particularly compulsions. Even activities of daily living became a challenge, with rituals tied to counting and the need to redo actions to stave off intrusive, terrifying thoughts. He felt alone as he found himself terrified to share these fears with anyone around him but that in turn intensified his fear.

To cope with the stress of the disorder, he turned to religion which soon became an obsession in itself. He prayed for hours, but he was often unsure if God was truly listening.

At school, he was bullied for his strange behaviors, and the weight of his symptoms seemed to isolate him further. It wasn't until after leaving the Amish community and attending seminars to confront his fears that Sam began to make his first steps in overcoming his condition. A pivotal moment came when he realized, "Don't be afraid. Just don't be afraid. Everything will be okay if you stop being afraid."

Eventually, Sam found comfort in sculpting, which would lead to the creation of two bronze sculptures for an NBA team. This achievement, along with the subsequent recognition of his life story, proved to be both healing and empowering. His film *My Name is Sam* has since helped countless others in conversations about OCD and providing comfort to one another.

Sam's journey illustrates that despite the darkest paths, there is always a potential for light. Today, he advocates for those with OCD through organizations like the Anxiety and Depression Association of America and his story continues to inspire hope for anyone living with this challenging condition.



Georgina's Story

Georgina's story with OCD began at the age of seventeen, initially centered around fears of contamination, a common obsession suffered by those with OCD. What started as excessive cleaning soon started spiraling out of control.

Georgina recalls that at her worst, she would spend up to ten hours each day scrubbing her hands and body, believing that unless she performed these rituals, she would hurt others. She even restricted her food and water intake to avoid going to the bathroom, as the rituals required for a simple trip to the toilet were overwhelming.

The obsessive pursuit of cleanliness and perfection led Georgina to self-harm, as she began to cut her fingernails to the point of bleeding, and began to use harsh chemicals on her hands, leaving her skin raw and scarred.

During her first year of university, her life revolved around seeking reassurance from doctors, her body constantly battered by her rituals and her mind trapped in a state of fear and anxiety. She felt as if she was stuck in a loop and she could not escape.

Georgina's breakthrough came when her mother, desperate for help, pushed her to make that first appointment with a doctor. Despite the difficulty of articulating her pain, Georgina's willingness to seek help was the beginning of her journey toward understanding her condition.

